



## Trafficked

*Peg Brantley*

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# **Trafficked**

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**Trafficked** Peg Brantley

Sex trafficking.

Not Thailand. Or the Philippines. Or Russia.

America.

Rich or poor, black or white, girls disappear across this country every day, pulled into the nightmarish world of prostitution and drugs.

Mex Anderson is back, tasked with finding three missing girls before it's too late. Three girls. Three girls who could live in your town, your neighborhood, or in your own home.

Jayla Imani Thomas is fifteen. A smart kid from a poor part of town who has to fend for herself. Jayla is headed for college and a better life than her mother had.

Alexis Emily Halston is seventeen. Money provides everything she wants or needs except functional parents. Alexis has the world by the tail and she knows it.

Olivia Emma Campbell is twelve. She's a middle child who dreams of being a veterinarian when she grows up. But right now "Livvy" just wants someone to notice her, maybe even to love her.

Caught up in a cruel system fueled by lust and money, all three young women must find the courage within themselves to survive. And Mex must come to terms with his own loss and face his demons head on—or he might not have the strength to save them.

## **Trafficked Details**

Date : Published May 23rd 2017 by Bark Publishing, LLC

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Author : Peg Brantley

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## From Reader Review Trafficked for online ebook

### **LuAnn Rodriquez says**

Ms. Brantley does an excellent job of writing with sympathy and passion about one of the worst crimes in the history of mankind! Her characters are real and believable and the situations they find themselves in equally so. I thoroughly enjoyed the pieces of news coverage or reports collected that preceded each chapter. She leaves those who read this book with specific ideas on agencies to contact and ideas to fight such a horrendous way of using those who cannot protect themselves for the perpetrators to make money with no exercise of kindness, conscience or morals. This book is educational but also written in a way where you care about those at risk. Not necessarily an easy read, but well worth the effort if you refuse to be judgmental and are responsible enough to care about making this world a better place to live for all!

I received an advance copy of this eBook in exchange for my honest review of it.

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### **3 no 7 says**

“Trafficked” by Peg Brantley is the second in the Mex Anderson series. It is not necessary to have the previous book to understand this one. Any background information is included in the narrative, and there is no unnecessary summarizing of the previous book.

I start with a caution; this book deals with a difficult social problem, and it is not easy to read. “Trafficked” is frightening in its realism and disturbing in its implication for the world in which we live. Every day children, mostly girls, disappear in THIS this country, and are dragged into the disturbing world of prostitution and drugs. The problem is upsetting, and mainstream media mostly overlook it; all the more reason to read about it.

The book is disturbing because the girls themselves write it in three first person narratives. Jayla Imani Thomas, fifteen, is smart, from a poor part of town, and used to fending for herself. Alexis Emily Halston, seventeen, has everything money can buy except involved parents. Olivia Emma Campbell, twelve, just wants someone to pay attention to her. All three fall victim to human traffickers.

In between the chilling narratives by the girls, is the story of Mex Anderson who searches for them. I will not give away the plot, but the atmosphere is frantic and the pace is rapid as leads go nowhere and the pressure to find the girls before it is too late escalates. In the midst of this, Mex has personal struggles of his own to juggle.

Brantley researched this difficult subject well. At the start of each chapter, she reminds readers that this happens here, in the United States, every day, by inserting quotes on human trafficking from newspapers and investigative reports, or case histories from other documented sources.

This is not an easy book to read. By mixing engaging fiction with startling reality, Brantley produced an exceptional book. Her well-articulated and yet sensitive treatment of three girls who found themselves caught up in human trafficking make it a book that everyone, parents and especially teens, should read.

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## Viga Boland says

One of the joys of being a book reviewer is suddenly discovering a brilliantly, talented author like Peg Brantley. Brantley is a crime fiction writer with three previous books to her credit. If *Trafficked* is any indication of the kind of writing one can expect in those other books, you'll be wanting to check them out as soon as your heart and head calm down after you finish *Trafficked*.

On her author's website at [www.pegbrantley.com](http://www.pegbrantley.com), Brantley states she couldn't understand why her stories were referred to as "thrillers". Well that is exactly what *Trafficked* is. Even more specifically, it's a psychological thriller that will leave you chilled, shaking your head at the ugly and heartbreak reality of the sexual trafficking of young people, particularly, in this case, females.

*Trafficked* completely fits the description of a thriller as stated on the home page of Brantley's site:

... thrillers are typically the most emotional, focusing on the fear, doubt and dread of the hero as she faces some form of what Dean Koontz has deemed 'terrible trouble.'

There's actually several heroes facing "terrible trouble" in *Trafficked*: Mex Anderson, the private eye hired to locate the privileged but ignored 17-year-old daughter of a wealthy business man; Mex's estranged sister, Sedona, who cannot redeem herself despite the help she gives Mex; Cade, Mex's woman; Darius, Mex's right hand man; and Rachel, a former prostitute who will be key to the eventual rehabilitation of the three, trafficked females, Jayla, Alexis and Livvy. These three young women each emerge from *Trafficked* with lives forever changed, but each in her own way, a heroic survivor of "terrible trouble".

It's human nature to want to tune out the constant media reports of the sexual trafficking of children and teens: it's a reality many would prefer to pretend doesn't exist, or that they tell themselves only happens in other people's lives, in other countries, other cultures. Well reading *Trafficked* will convince you otherwise. It will make you more wary and you need to be. The victims in *Trafficked* hail from Denver. Alexis comes from a wealthy family, spends her time working out and has money to burn; 15-year-old Jayla, a good student hoping to make something of her future, comes from a poor background where her single mom has too many mouths to feed; and Livvy? she's your typical 12-year-old teen, sharing secrets with her BFF, but looking for romantic love in the wrong place: the internet. What makes these three females coming from such varying backgrounds so appealing to, and such easy marks for predators? Read *Trafficked* to find out. These girls could be one of your daughters...a chilling reality revealed brilliantly by Peg Brantley.

The author states on her site that in fiction based on social issues, it's the "characters that drive the story". That is definitely true of *Trafficked* and just one of the reasons this book is so hard to put down. The other reason is tied to what Brantley says here about what happened to her as she did her research for this book:

"The research for this story about buried me. Not only was there a lot of material, it was horrific. While I write fiction, and can tell it the way I want to tell it, what I was reading was real and not the way anyone wants it. I thought of these enslaved people and the heroes who never stop fighting to free them, and it was almost more than I could bear."

Readers of *Trafficked*, will, like the author, find what they read is almost more than they can bear. It would be lovely to be able to close the book and say, "That was a great read! Thankfully, it's only fiction!" But you

won't say that as Brantley also prefaces each chapter with snippets from newspaper, book and various reports on trafficking that will alarm and frighten you and make you want to put your arms around your children and make sure you always know where they are, who they are with and what they are doing.

But more important is the one question we all need to ask ourselves when it comes to our children: in our ever busy lives chasing what we think our families need, are we giving them what they really need? If we are, then maybe we will spare them the "terrible trouble" that Alexis, Jayla and Livvy faced in *Trafficked*. Add this book to your reading list today. You'll be glad you did.

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No Tears for My Father: A true story of incest  
Don't Write Your MEmoir without ME!

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### **Lelia Taylor says**

Sex trafficking is one of those topics "nice" people don't want to think or talk about; it's more comfortable to pretend that sort of thing is so distant from our own lives that it has very little real meaning. Sure, it happens in third world countries or in really bad areas of countries like our own, but it doesn't affect us, right? Yes, we know all about prostitution and how rampant that is, even close by sometimes , but that's not really sex trafficking, right?

Wrong, so wrong.

The three girls depicted here could be your neighbor, your own child's best friend, the daughter of the organist at your church. In other words, they're completely normal girls who, for one reason or another, are at risk, and Jayla is on the verge of being dragged into the life when we first meet her. The betrayal by her friend might seem dramatic license but it happens a lot more than we want to think.

Mex and Cade have a story of their own and Mex, in particular, knows the pain of loss. The two of them have emotional ties and things they're trying to work through but, with the help of Mex's friend, Darius, they are intent on saving these three girls. Of course, the upshot of any saving they can do is that there are many, many more girls like them still trapped in a horrific existence.

Although this is certainly a bleak topic and there's a lot of darkness in the story, there's one thing that brings a light of hope and that's the girls' resilience, their determination that they will not lose their souls. I really think *Trafficked* should be on every middle and high school reading list so that these kids (and it's not just girls) can have some sense of the dangers out there. Well done, Ms. Brantley!

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### **Kathleen Hickey says**

This book kept me up way too late one night. Once I started it, I couldn't put it down until I knew what happened to the 3 girls who are the center of the story. Peg Brantley has continued the characters of Mex Anderson and Cade LeBlanc from her excellent *THE SACRIFICE*, but it is the girls caught in the horrific web of sex trafficking that compel your interest. Their individual characters are carefully drawn with details that make them very real and sympathetic.

Ms. Brantley has done extensive research on her subject, and the plight of these girls is drawn from the true stories and statistics that should horrify and outrage us all. She starts each chapter with excerpts from her research and includes a list of resources for further education and opportunities to help.

I highly recommend this book. It is a suspenseful story with an important message and takes the reader into a world that I suspect many of us did not know existed.

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### **Scott Feighner says**

I first discovered Colorado author Peg Brantley when I submitted an audition to narrate her novel Red Tide (Aspen Falls Thrillers Book 1). I didn't get that particular job, but I did enjoy reading Red Tide for my own pleasure. Eventually, we became Facebook friends and have corresponded often. Recently I was asked if I would be willing to be an early reader of her latest work TRAFFICKED. I agreed. So with my very own ARC, I sat down and read it in a weekend.

This is the worst kind of horror novel one can read. Not because of monsters under the bed or hiding in the closet. The monsters are people you trust and are friends with. Peg creates a scary look into the world of Sex Trafficking as it takes place, not in the foreign lands you normally hear about, but here in America. And for that reason, the stark reality of the story, it is a difficult read. But it is an important read. There are three girls who have fallen victim to traffickers and each has their own believable backstory. Peg has obviously done her homework. We learn that "the girls" are simply viewed as a business asset to be used until they are no longer needed.

It is up to Mex Anderson, the private investigator with plenty of baggage of his own, to find and rescue the girls. This turns out not to be an easy task. Mex is as flawed a character as you'll ever meet.

During the course of TRAFFICKED, you'll learn just how pervasive trafficking is...at the head of each chapter, there is a quote or a statistic. These are real events, and they will put a scare into you. For this reason, it may not be for the very squeamish.

Is this a perfect book? No. But it's very close. Were there a .5 option, TRAFFICKED would have received 4.5 stars from me. Peg has when all is said and done, written an important book. It is investigative reporting masked as a novel. It's the kind of novel that must be read by parents, caregivers, and teachers to learn what to look for.

The dangers are real.

The monsters are real.

Download as soon as you can.

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### **Aly says**

I enjoyed this book very much. It was eye opening that Trafficking is still going on in this country. What these girls went through in this book. It was not an easy book to read but I enjoyed it. The investigators conviction to find and help these girls made the story more compelling to me. I am glad I was asked to listen to this audiobook. Even though there is sadness in this story, there is hope, strength and so much more. \*This book was given to me for free at my request and I provided this voluntary review.\*

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### **Monica Mac says**

This was an incredible book. Not an easy book to read by any means, considering the subject matter, but a very well-written and articulate account of three girls who found themselves caught up in human trafficking. My heart broke for them all, and I can see just how easy it is for traffickers to take advantage of the vulnerable.

The author did an amazing job of researching this difficult subject and I am sure that many tears were shed by her when uncovering some of the stories of these (mostly) children. I really enjoyed that she put a little snippet about a true case at the beginning of every chapter, it really brought it home to me that human trafficking goes on every hour of every day, and most of us are totally unaware of it.

In amongst the stories of the three girls, was the story of Mex and Cade, which was also quite an interesting one. This was no sweet and easy love story, Mex in particular has really been through the mill. I loved the relationship these two had though and I really hope that there will be another book after this one, I really want to read more about them.

This is a highly recommended book from me.

I voluntarily reviewed an Advance Reader Copy of this book and all opinions expressed are my own.

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### **Henny Penny says**

I have never read any books from this author before, I volunteered to read a free copy for a review - I can't say I enjoyed the book, as the subject matter is not enjoyable, but I did find it a good read, which dealt well with a difficult topic of child sexual abuse, through human trafficking and modern slavery. I try not to read book previews before starting a book and I was glad I did not in this case, as the subject area is a bit too close to my working life for me to want to read it in my leisure time. However, I am really glad I read it. The book had graphic parts in it, and these were difficult to read, clearly the Author has a good knowledge of the subject, and managed to write a difficult subject without it being too gruesome throughout. That said, she also managed to get across the desperation and degradation involved in human trafficking, and presented a realistic view that for some people, they are left with no hope, identity or ability to escape. If you are looking for a happy ever after book, this is not it, if you want to read a book and learn something, which may provoke thought and encourage you to safeguard your own children, have a wider awareness of issues, indicators to look for in other vulnerable children, it's a good read.

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### **Theresa Crater says**

I grew up knowing that slavery was a thing of the past, at least in the U.S. Until I heard about human trafficking. Even then, I thought of Eastern Europe or Southeast Asia. But no. The town I live in tops the list of most sex trafficking because it is so centrally located. Brantley has written a lively detective story that shows the horrors of this world without leaving her readers a hopeless mess. We meet three women from three different backgrounds who are sold into sex slavery in three of the ways that are common in this world. Riches, street-smarts, watchful friends--none of these things save these girls. But Mex Anderson and his team do. This book is fast-paced and well written. I recommend it to anyone interested in strong female characters, the sex slave trade, or good detective fiction.

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### **iamnotabookworm says**

This book is about human trafficking, specifically sex trafficking of minors. And the setting is not in some third-world country but in the land of milk and honey--the US.

The hero of this story is Mex Anderson. A private investigator who was tasked to find three girls. Jayla is fifteen. A smart kid from a poor family. Her mom can't survive without a man. Alexis is seventeen. A daughter of a rich businessman and a drunk mother who can't even take care of herself. Olivia is twelve. A middle child who is hungry for attention. These three will tell their horrendous experiences under their horrible captors. Mex, along with his smart girlfriend Cade and his friend, Darius, who is a writer with a lot of useful connections, will find these girls and get them home.

This story implied that this is not Mex, Cade and Darius first rodeo. They have done this assignment before but the difference is it was not human trafficking. Saving girls from sex trafficking is a total different playing field which they found is very dangerous and very rampant. These three people will come to deal with a totally different species of human evil. Good thing they are a lot smarter.

Oh, what horrors this book has divulged. No one is safe from human trafficking. Boy or girl, white or black, rich or poor. And you can't trust anyone. These three girls trusted the wrong people which led them to a nightmare they never even imagined. What saved them was their belief that even if their bodies and will were broken but their souls are still intact. Their souls belong only to them. They refuse to surrender everything to their captors and those that violate them.

Books like these are what everyone should be reading. I think teens and those unsuspecting kids who are most likely the target should read this book so they will be aware. So they won't fall prey to those people who are likely to take advantage of their innocence and trust. Parents should read this too. This is a very educational story. It is not a bedtime story but I guess we are all better aware than sorry. It is indeed a difficult and scary time that we live in. We can't even trust some of those we call friends just like what happened to one of the characters in this story.

I give this book 5/5 stars. This is a very brave undertaking. Taking on stories of this subject is dangerous. You have to balance both fiction and reality to make the story believable and credible. Putting in the news article excerpts added in the weight of truth and stab of reality to the whole thing. Reading this did not feel

like reading fiction at all, it was like listening to a painstaking recounting of a very traumatic experience. I was like praying each time that Mex will find these girls before they totally give up and lost it.

Congratulations Miss Peg Brantley. A very well-written and scary tale but is a good doze of very hard facts. I hope this story will serve as an eye-opener to those who are still unaware of these unforgiving and indiscriminate traffickers. That parents and kids will always be very vigilant and aware of their surroundings and of the people around them. That those who were unfortunate victims of these soulless traffickers and pimps will have more strength and hope that whatever happened to them was not their fault and they should not blame themselves. They were victims and these devils deserved to be hanged over and over again for the nightmares and evils they have done. They are unforgivable.

I feel like that every day. It's like I work toward this one life and then a gust of wind comes along and pushes me towards another one, scraping off a part of me every time.

- Peg Brantley, Trafficked -

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### **Vickie Sarmina says**

What a thought provoking book!! Imagine your 12 year child being coerced into meeting someone that they thought would be their first true love! Meeting that person for the first time, having them treat your child with kid gloves, buying them clothes, meals, etc., and then stealing their virginity! Then kidnapping your child and forcing her or him into human sex trafficking. All the while, you are absolutely helpless. The authorities can only do so much, because once the children are under the protection of pimps, they become lost and sometimes are never found. This book was written to describe the lives of three young girls, Jayla, Livvy, and Alexis, ranging from the age of 12 up to 15 years of age, and all with a variety of ethnic backgrounds and cultures. The book follows each girl throughout their kidnapping and captivity into sex trafficking. I had known about sex trafficking; however, I did not know that it was to such a magnitude as this book states. The money that is funneled for sex trafficking is astounding. The author also gives detailed information on how these young people are taken and what is involved in trying to rescue them. This book tells the real story that many people shy away from because it is so horrific and it happens every minute of every day! The public really needs to be made aware of human sex trafficking and what to look out for. It could happen to someone close to you, relative, friend, or co-worker. No one is immune!! The characters in this book are very realistic and the reader can almost relate to their emotions. What will happen to Jayla, Libby, and Alexis? Will they be able to get away from their captors? What will become of them?

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### **Kady Monroe says**

Not a story for the faint-hearted. This audiobook is about human trafficking and follows the story of three young girls. They are all different ages and from different backgrounds, but all suffer at the hands of their captors, plus they have to deal with the knowledge of the betrayal by someone they trusted.

Mex is the man who is drawn into the case by the wealthy family to investigate the disappearance of their daughter. He soon realises there are other missing girls and makes it his goal to get them back.

Overall I enjoyed the way the story was told and the narrator did a good job. I felt the male character voices could have been a little more masculine, especially Mex. But it didn't put me off continuing. Well worth a listen.

I was given a copy of this audiobook for an honest review.

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## **AudioBookReviewer says**

### **My original Trafficked audiobook review and many others can be found at Audiobook Reviewer.**

Trafficked by Peg Brantley brings home some very disturbing facts about trafficking – specifically young children (7 – 15). Brantley reminds us that America is just as vile as Thailand, Russia and other countries are known for human trafficking. It is the men and women – some are survivors themselves of trafficking – that dedicate their life to rescuing these victims.

Following the enslaving of several children – Alexis, Jayla, Olivia – we have front row seats to their journey of horror. Sold, some for mere dollars, to the highest bidder these children are bought and turned out into the streets as prostitutes.

Olivia just wanted someone to love her; Jayla was staying with a friend who had financial problems – he solved them by selling her; and, Alexis made a mistake.

Mex is the man who tries to rescue as many children as he can – entering the deadly underworld of human trafficking as a “John.” He is the only one these children can depend on to rescue them and return them home. But Mex is a man with a past and lots of pain. He must make sure that pain and his loss doesn’t get in the way of his rescues!

Brantley presents the horrible facts of human trafficking in the US at the beginning of each chapter. It was unsettling to learn that each fact she shared happened in the US. This is not a book one can hear without nightmares and it is not one that can be listened to and forgotten. The importance of hearing this book and discussing the practice is vital - it is real.

Sandra Murphy gives an excellent performance, giving each girl her own voice. One can hear the fear, longing and finally despair of each character. One cannot help but feel overwhelming pain for these children. The longing to help grows with each passing chapter and Murphy's performance moves the story forward. The disbelief that this happens in the US is there and hard to believe but one cannot dispute it given the cited sources. So much horror – makes one not trust ANYONE!

As a mother of two and grandmother of seven, this book is difficult to hear. It has made me more afraid of what could happen than any other book I have heard. Poignant, heart-rending, and painful but one that needs to be heard!

The story flows well, transitions are smooth, character development is spot on.

There were no issues with the quality or audio production of this book.

Audiobook was provided for review by the author.

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## Lorraine Montgomery says

**Trafficked** is a rather intense novel that will leave you thinking about it for days after you turn the last page or close your Kindle. And so it should. Modern slavery and sex trafficking exist probably in the city you live in and yet hundreds of thousands of ordinary people are oblivious to the fact that it does exist. It is insidious and horrific for those enmeshed in its clutches and whether you read this book or not, you need to be aware of it and tell at least one other person about it. Become concerned; become an influence to eradicate it. I received a free advance copy of this ebook in exchange for an honest review.

This is the second **Mex Anderson** novel by **Peg Brantley** and it centres around three children of diverse ages and backgrounds. Each of them gets caught up in a total nightmare through no fault of their own and by different scenarios. Each is believable and each is totally scary. It could happen to someone you know.

Jayla Thomas — Denver, Colorado — is a hard-working, black high school student with straight "A"s. Her mother has "boyfriends" and doesn't want her around when they drop by so she has a variety of places she can crash. One such place belongs to Chris. Chris seems like a nice guy who digs computers but he has got involved in online betting and he's jammed up. He owes big time. He can get out from under if he sets Jayla up for a college prank. He's pretty sure it isn't a college prank but doesn't want to think about what it might really be. This is his ticket out.

Alexis Halston — Denver, Colorado — is 17 years old and totally fit. She comes from a wealthy family where her father only has time for business and her mother is boozed up most of the time. She has great wheels, and looks and acts worldly wise and independent. Her trainer, Donny, moves from gym to gym every few months, zeroes in on someone with money, strikes up a relationship, and bilks them. But Alexis doesn't come into her money until she's 21 and Donny has already invested too much time in her to wait, so he's ready to sell her. It's all set.

Olivia — Aurora, Utah — is 12 years old, has a best friend Maddy, and wants to be a vet. Being a kid sucks and she wishes she were grown up. She meets Ian on Facebook when she's at Maddy's. They meet and soon, Ian is the most important person in her life. But Ian is not who he seems and fortunately for Livvy, Maddy is more street-wise and distrustful than she is.

Mex and his friend, Cade, have rescued kidnap victims before. Together they work with police and social work contacts, the Internet, and their wits to track victims and rescue them. The three victims are being used by different pimps from the sleazy back alley type to the wealthy psychotic. All are being brutalized. Each story is interwoven with chapters following their pursuit by Mex, Cade, and their friend, Darius. Their trails lead in more than one direction, one, out of the country. Each chapter begins with a quote from a book, newspaper, or famous person. Some of the facts are shocking. Most of them are grim. My favourite is from Nelson Mandela, There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way it treats its children.

This is a taut story, full of tension and eliciting disgust. It is a story that had to be told. Never doubt that it is based in reality and never doubt that you can make a difference. Be sure to read the author's note at the end and check out the resources as well. I would add this site, Free the Slaves, to the list, and urge you to become aware and involved. (I know I said that already but it can't be said enough.) **Trafficked** is now available in ebook and soon in paperback. An excellent book!

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